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the *Conseil de Commerce* though mentioned is apparently not thought of sufficient importance to receive further notice.

*Cesare Borgia: a Biography.* By WILLIAM HARRISON WOODWARD.  
(London: Chapman and Hall. 1913. Pp. ix, 477.)

It is astonishing, in view of the extensive literature upon the Borgia family, that any one should feel encouraged to add thereto, and it is more astonishing still that the effort should lead to such a volume as the present, embodying results which unhesitatingly recommend themselves as worth the exacting labor. These results indeed are largely a matter of shades, for the historic figure of Cesare as well as those of Alexander and Lucrezia have been so closely studied within the last twenty years that they stand revealed to us in their essential lines, but the fact is certain that the reputation of the Borgias when living suffered extraordinarily at the hands of malicious gossips and when dead was inflated to mythological proportions by indignant moralists and lively rhetoricians. The professional student may feel some justifiable elation that the effect of each new scholarly attack upon the Borgia legend has been to pare down some excrescences and to that general rule the present book is no exception. The author is not a member of the honorable order of genial whitewashers but a diligent and sober investigator whose close attention to evidence coupled with the strict elimination of rumor has enabled him to tone down in some noticeable respects the received idea of the red-handed Borgias. It is for this reason that his achievement may be called an affair of shades, and this is the reason, too, why Cesare, without becoming white, loses much of that unrelieved blackness with which his qualities were inked in by earlier biographers. A human and intelligible Cesare—who does not welcome him in the place of the nursery bugaboo whose face has been distorted till it is no better than a carnival mask? Without pleading, by a cool and rather colorless presentation of evidence, Mr. Woodward has disposed of many charges which have been laid at the door of the Borgias: for instance, it will hardly be possible any longer to declare that Cesare murdered his brother Gandia, and the overworked tale that Alexander died and Cesare just failed to die from poison intended for another will have to vanish from the text-books that preach the corruption of the papacy. No crime that Cesare authentically committed is glossed over, and, I hurry to add, in order to forestall disappointment, the catalogue of misdeeds which remains is still impressive. And what is the upshot? Instead of committing murder from blood-lust or like a highwayman in order to strip a wretched victim of his shirt, Cesare emerges more clearly than ever as a really serious political figure who, guided by the rules of conduct dominant in the Italy of his day, fixed his eyes upon a goal and steadily marched toward it regardless of the objects heaped in his path. The political audacity and clear-sightedness, the military skill

and patience of Cesare appear in higher relief in this book than ever before with the single exception of the very first biography of the whole long list, incorporated in Macchiavelli's famous disquisition on the *Prince*. The Florentine's idealized portrait is cast in lines which tally amazingly with the sober draughtsmanship of the most recent scholar. Some misconceptions with regard to Alexander VI. also receive correction, as for example, the common charge that the pope became the sultan's ally and accommodatingly murdered the Turkish Prince Djem for a lump sum. Alexander's firm policy in the face of the invasion of 1494 has never been set in a better light, and the contention is on the whole capably sustained that his political degradation did not begin until he resigned the reins into the hands of his masterful son. In the matter of the great enterprise in the Romagna the author sustains the rather incredible thesis that Cesare might have succeeded if he had built on Spain instead of France.

As every writer has the defect of his qualities it will not occur to any one to look to Mr. Woodward for brilliant writing. His book, like good English beef, can be assimilated only by the aid of vigorous mastication. It includes an appendix of documents printed, most of them, for the first time and offers a bibliography which is a model of its kind. A sketch-plan of the old basilica of St. Peter together with the palace of the Vatican forms a valuable illustrative feature.

FERDINAND SCHEVILL.

*The Reign of Henry VII. from Contemporary Sources.* By A. F. POLLARD, M.A., Hon. Litt.D., Professor of English History, University of London. [University of London Historical Series, no. I.] In three volumes. (London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1913-1914. Pp. lxx, 332; 348; 344.)

WITH this work Professor Pollard makes a new departure in the method of publishing sources. His purpose is to collect within convenient compass a series of contemporary documents sufficient to give a fairly comprehensive view of Henry VII.'s reign; and he has in mind chiefly the needs of the undergraduate student (pp. v, vi). The result is a happy medium between the so-called source-books, which are too fragmentary, and the large collections of original materials, which are for the most part too great in bulk and unsystematic in arrangement for intelligent exploration by the average undergraduate; if indeed they be available for his use. The advantages of this system should appeal strongly to teachers who have experienced the difficulties of bringing undergraduate students into profitable contact with sources.

The extracts represent the most varied types of contemporary literature; a ballad finds place beside the minutes of the council of the city